

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY KIGALI POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0720

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:EAID, BY
SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE CORPS PROGRAM IN BURUNDI

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE TIME IS RIPE FOR THE INITIATION OF A MODEST ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PCV PROGRAM IN BURUNDI. THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY BE VERY RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA. AUTHORIZATION OF AN INITIAL FORMAL APPROACH IS REQUESTED. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE ARRIVING IN BURUNDI, THE POSSIBILITY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROGRAM FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IN THE COUNTRY HAS COME UP IN SEVERAL OF MY CONVERSATIONS WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD AND IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE BURUNDI CONCERNED ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE DETAILS OF PEACE CORPS OPERATIONS, NOR, GIVEN CHANGES OF PERSONNEL IN THE INTERIM, DO THEY REMEMBER THE EARLY 1972 NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH WE WENT SO FAR AS TO TRANSMIT TO THE GOVERNMENT THE TEXT OF A PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR SUBSEQUENT PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY. THEY ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE THAT NO PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS HAVE EVEN BEEN PRESENT, AND THEY WOULD LIKE TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION.

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2. DISCUSSIONS ABOUT PCVS GENERALLY TAKE PLACE IN THE

CONTEXT OF BURUNDI'S STRONGLY FELT AND URGENT REQUIREMENT TO INCREASE ITS INVENTORY OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO CAN STUDY IN AND DO BUSINESS WITH THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD, ESPECIALLY WITH INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT EAST AFRICA. I HAVE MENTIONED TO THEM THE POSSIBILITY, IF WASHINGTON WERE TO LOOK FAVORABLY ON AN AGREEMENT, OF STARTING OUT WITH A RELATIVELY SMALL GROUP WHO WOULD TEACH ENGLISH AT SECONDARY AND/OR UNIVERSITY LEVELS, EITHER THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, OR, PERHAPS AT FIRST, ONLY IN THE CAPITAL. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN SUCH AN INITIAL PROGRAM, ALTHOUGH FATHER BARAKANA, THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY HAVING THE U.S. FUND THE STAFF AN ENGLISH INSTITUTE, AS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY, WHICH WOULD CONCENTRATE ON TRAINING BARUNDI AS ENGLISH TEACHERS.

3. IN LINE WITH PAST OFFICIAL INFORMAL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THIS POST AND WASHINGTON, I HAVE SOUNDED OUT LEONARD NDUWAYO, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ABOUT LIKELY OFFICIAL REACTIONS TO ANY FORMAL PROPOSAL OF A PC PROGRAM THAT THE US MIGHT EVENTUALLY MAKE. HE HAS BEEN QUITE POSITIVE IN HIS RESPONSES, AND HE HAS SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY THE COMMENT TO ME OF FOREIGN MINISTER SIMBANANIYE (WHO WAS SHIFTED TO THE EDUCATION MINISTRY ON NOV 11) THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES OUGHT TO TRY NEGOTIATING AN OVERALL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BEFORE UNDERTAKING FURTHER PEACEMEAL PROGRAMS. (I HAS ALSO AT ONCE REACTED QUITE NEGATIVELY TO SIMBANANIYE'S SUGGESTION ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD GREATLY COMPLICATE A RELATIVELY STRAIGHTFORWARD AND SIMPLE MATTER, SUCH AS A PC PRESENCE; AND NDUWAYO ASCRIBED THE COMMENT TO SIMBANANIYE'S IRREPRESSIBLE PENCHANT FOR FORMAL ACCORDS, AS A RESULT OF HIS LEGAL TRAINING. IN ANY CASE, THE NUMBER TWO MAN AT THE EDUCATION MINISTRY LADISLAS NDAYE IS MOST POSITIVE ABOUT PCVS).

4. AS IS EVIDENT FROM BUJUMBURA'S 695, I CONSIDER THE PROSPECTS FOR LAW AND ORDER IN BURUNDI TO BE QUITE GOOD OVER THE NEXT YEARS, AND, IN ANY CASE, EUROPEANS WERE NEVER THE TARGETS DURING THE INTER-ETHNIC BRUTALITIES OF RECENT YEARS. THUS, THE OUTLOOK FOR THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF PCVS WOULD BE EXCELLENT.

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FURTHERMORE, I THINK THAT THE AUTHORITIES WOULD COOPERATE QUITE FULLY WITH ANY PC PROGRAM, AND, INDEED, MIGHT AFTER PRODDING, BE WILLING TO MAKE MODEST CONTRIBUTIONS OF SIMPLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR HOUSING VOLUNTEERS. MORE SUBSTANTIIVELY, WE HAVE A GENERAL INTEREST IN FACILITATING THE ACCESS OF YOUNG AND EDUCATED BARUNDI TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE MATERIALS. BROADER CONTACTS WITH EAST AFRICA WILL HELP GRADUALLY TO ENLARGE BARUNDI HORIZONS AWAY FROM EXCESSIVE PREOCCUPATION WITH THEIR PAROCHIAL INTERNAL

TENSIONS AND CAN ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF A MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE ON ETHNIC ISSUES. THIS FITS IN WELL WITH EXISTING U.S. POLICY TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH BURUNDI ON THE PATTERN OF US ACTIVITIES IN SIMILAR SMALL AFRICAN NATIONS.

5. AS TO THE INITIAL THRUST OF PC EFFORTS HERE, IT IS TRUE THAT SOME TYPE OF AGRICULTURE-ORIENTED WORK WOULD BE VERY LIKELY TO BENEFIT THE HUTU MASSES (WHO ARE PEASANTS; MORE DIRECTLY THAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING TO STUDENTS WHO, AT PRESENT, ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY TUTSI IN NUMBERS. NONETHELESS, WITHOUT EXTENSIVE STUDY HERE, IT IS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO SEE JUST HOW THE PEACE CORPS COULD NOW USEFULLY FIT INTO THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION OR FARM EXTENSION SERVICES, WHEN SO MANY FRENCH, BELGIAN, UNDP, AND WORLD BANK (IDA) PROGRAMS ARE ALREADY IN ACTION IN THIS AREA. ON THE OTHER HAND, NO OTHER EXTERNAL AGENCY IS WORKING ON ENGLISH TEACHING, AND IT WOULD SEEM A RELATIVELY SIMPLE WAY TO START. IT MIGHT EVEN BE POSSIBLE TO USE THE BUKAVU PC ORIENTATION TRAINING FACILITIES FOR PCVS COMING TO BURUNDI, WITH SOME MODIFICATION TO ALLOW PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL MATERIAL RELEVANT TO THIS COUNTRY BUT NOT TO ZAIRE.

6. I AM INTRIGUED BY BARAKANA'S INTEREST (ALSO CONVEYED MONTHS AGO TO AMBASSADOR YOST) IN AN AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO SET UP AN ENGLISH INSTITUTE. CLEARLY, SUCH A SCHOOL WOULD PUT ENGLISH TRAINING HERE ON A LONG-TERM, SELF SUSTAINING BASIS. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THERE ARE SOME PCVS WHO HAVE THE MORE SPECIALIZED LINGUISTICS BACKGROUND (AS DOES MARGARET CROCKER, OUR CURRENT FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR AT THE UNIVERSITY) WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR STAFFING AN INSTITUTE ON A MULTI-YEAR BASIS. ALTHOUGH THERE IS A GOOD PROSPECT OF A WORLD BANK (IDA) LOAN TO BUILD UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL PLANT HERE IN A FEW YEARS, I IMAGINE THAT BARAKANA HAS IN MIND NOT ONLY AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR

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A FACULTY, BUT ALSO ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR A MODEST BUILDING TO HOUSE CLASSROOM AND STUDENTS. I ASSUME THAT SUCH A PROJECT WOULD BE WELL BEYOND ACTION-PC INTERESTS, AND HENCE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM AT HAND, BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE AN INDICATION OF HOW WE MIGHT PROCEED AT SOME JUNCTURE TO FIND FUNDING FOR SUCH AN ENTERPRISE FROM US GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE US SOURCES (ALSO OF WHETHER THERE IS ANY PRECEDENT FOR ANGLO-AMERICAN COOPERATION IN SUCH A VENTURE).

7. ACTION REQUESTED: I WOULD LIKE EARLY AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL OFFER TO THE GRB OF A PC ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM IN THE COUNTRY TO START WITH THE AUTUMN 1975 ACADEMIC YEAR. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF I COULD SAY THAT WE ENVISAGE ABOUT 20 OR 25 PCVS INITIALLY, ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A SURVEY IN BURUNDI BY AN EXPERIENCED PC OFFICIAL BEFORE

ANY FINAL COMMITMENT WERE MADE. PLEASE ALSO ADVISE WHETHER THE 1972 DRAFT AGREEMENT REMAINS VALID AS THE BASIS FOR DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN US. ANY OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PREFERRED PLACES OF ASSIGNMENT OF PCVS IN BURUNDI, THEIR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, EXPERIENCE IN RECRUITING PCVS FOR SIMILAR WORK ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, CALIBER OF CURRENT CROP OF PCVS, SPECIAL FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS, ETC. WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.

MARK

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